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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
Right Honourable the
Lord Mayor and Aldermen
OF THE
City of London,

AT
 Guild-Hall Chappel,

On Sunday, Novemb. 13. 1692.

By RICHARD BOWCHIER, B. D. Fellow of
St. John's College in Cambridge, and Chaplain
to the Right Reverend Father in God, Robert,
Lord Bishop of Chichester.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishops-Head* in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1692.

S E R M O N

Preached before the

Right Honourable the

Lord Mayor and Aldermen

OF THE

City of London



On Sunday, November 13, 1696

By Richard Boscawen, B.D. Fellow
of St John's College in Cambridge, and Chaplain
to the Right Reverend Father in God, the
Lord Bishop of Exeter.

L O N D O N

Printed for John Knap, at the Bible and
St Paul's Church-Yard, 1696.

Right Honourable

Sir John Fleet,

Lord Mayor of London.

My Lord,

When I was appointed to Preach
before Your Lordship, I little
imagined, That what was
then delivered, would have ever receiv'd
Your Lordships Orders to be made Pub-
lick. I am, my Lord, truly conscious to
my self of the meanness of this Discourse;

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but,

but, instead of making Apologies, I here
entirely resign my self to Your Lordships
Commands; which both shews my Obedi-
ence, and, at the same time, furnishes
me with an excellent opportunity of tel-
ling the World what a high Re-
spect and Duty I am,

Sir John Fleet
My Lord,

Your Lordships
Lord Mayor of London.
most Humble,

and most obedient Servant

When I was appointed to Preach
at your Lordships, I have
imagined, that what was
then delivered, would have been received
by your Lordships Orders to be made Pub-
lic. I am, my Lord, truly conscious to
my self of the meanness of the Discourse.
A

by their false and pleasing Doctrines almost
every where corrupted the Faith which the
other planted. Thus we find that they imitate
directly *Galatians 1. 8. 9.* *any man that preacheth
the Gospel, and is not of our Apostles, let him be
anathema.* *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in
the Spirit.*

TH E words seem to be an earnest and
passionate Exhortation to the practice
of a Religious and a Christian Life
drawn from that particular and exact account
of the Works of the *Flesh*, and the Fruit of
the *Spirit*, which the Apostle has given us,
from the 18th to the 24th verse of this Chap-
ter; and the occasion of them, in short, was
this. As the Church of God has in all Ages
been troubled with Men of corrupt Morals,
and pernicious Principles; so in the very first
beginnings of Christianity, there rose up a
sort of Men, who, as they were the first He-
reticks we ever read of, so for their damnable
Opinions and wicked Lives, have much out-
done all others of succeeding Times. They
were Men in whom there appeared wonder-
ful Falseness and Delight; and who taking al-
ways advantage of the Apostle's Abience, had
by

and

by their false and pleasing Doctrines, almost every where corrupted that Faith which the other planted. Thus we find that they immediately crept in amongst the Churches in the Upper Asia, where they made such speedy work in perverting the Gospel, and had by new Scruples and false Suggestions, so quickly shaken that Faith, which at first seemed so well grounded in the Galatians, as occasioned that mighty surprise in St. Paul, to find such a sudden change and alteration amongst them: *I marvel* (saith he, Galat. chap. 1. ver. 6.) *that you are so soon removed from him, who called you into the Grace of Christ unto another Gospel.* These Deceivers designing nothing but Ease and Interest, urged vehemently on the new Converted Christians Circumcision, and other Mosaiical Rites; not out of any Principle, or a real Perswasion there was in them of the necessity of either; but from a base and servile compliance to the humour of the Jews, hoping this way either to gain their Favour, or escape their Fury. For they constrained others to be Circumcised, only lest they themselves should suffer Persecution for the Cross of Christ; for neither they themselves (saith the Apostle) who were Circumcised kept the Law, but

but desired to have others Circumcised, that they might glory in the Flesh. And as it is safe and natural for Men, who can once force their Consciences, either for Fear or Interest, to stick at nothing afterwards, how black or desperate soever it may be, when they are pressed to it by the like motives, so that Men having once Preached up Circumcision, the Jews of old made no scruple afterwards to declare it lawful to deny even Christ himself, to avoid Persecution for him: Thus denying the Lord which bought them. These are the Men whom the Apostles point at in almost all their Epistles, and on whom they bestow such black and dismal Characters, as never could have been fastned but on the worst of Men and Devils (saith St. Paul) to the Cross of Christ, whose God was their Bally, whose Souldiers, whose minded harshly things, without malice Affection, Truce-breakers, False Accusers, Incontinent, Fierce, Despisers of those that were Good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, proud, and full of more then love of God, having a form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof. St. Peter a Character is no less severe concerning them, in his second Epistle, whom he styles, Natural brute Beasts, spots and blemishes, beguiling unstable

Souls, Wells without Water, Clouds (saith he)
 that were carried with a Tempest, to whom the
 Mist of Darknesse was reserved for ever. In On
 godly Men (saith St. Jude, speaking of the
 same Persons) turning the Grace of God into
 Disceptionnes, and denying the only Lord God,
 and our Lord Jesus Christ. These are the trou-
 lours in which they are set forth to us by the
 Apostles of our Lord, and as these Chara-
 cters to be sure were exactly drawn from their
 Carriages, so then there is nothing can be
 thought so wicked and abominable, so con-
 trary to Reason, and so destructive to Religion,
 as that of which these Men were guilty, and
 of which they stand recorded infamous to all
 succeeding Times. Pleasure and Interest be-
 ing that great principle that inspired all their
 Actions, they followed that to the uttermost.
 And as Mens Inclinations and Desires com-
 monly give a huge byas to their Understand-
 ings, so they falsly interpreted and used that
 liberty which the Gospel had given them, as
 an occasion to the Flesh, pretending that Christ
 in effect, had set them free from that strict
 and Religious course of Vertue and Goodness
 which he came on purpose to establish. And
 thus indulging themselves in the most vicious
 practises

practices, and justifying what they did by
 high pretences of knowledge, they were too
 far gone in conceit to be restrained themselves,
 and to busie and maliciously to correct
 others by their Examples. The infection of
 these Mens Principles had, like a strong Poy-
 son, diffused itself thro' the Body of all the
 Churches, for the greater part of Mahomet
 being naturally unstable, and being so easily
 so easily to penetrate into the Design and
 Artifices of false Teachers. Their craft and
 most corrupt part of any Command will
 commonly embrace and follow that Doctrine
 which suit best with their Passions, and not
 resist. And thus the case was now particularly
 in the Churches of the *Gentians*, whose Char-
 acter indeed is this, *That they were* Gal. 3. 7.
but were afterwards so foolish as to be misled by
men to obey the Law, before those men had Chap. 1.
Christ had been evidently set forth crucified
amongst them. For at the time of St. Paul's
 writing this Epistle, instead of adhering to
 that Gospel which he had learnt to necessarily
 Preached unto them, and which he tells them
 in his own defence, *Was that which he re-* Chap. 1.
ceived not of Man, neither was taught it, but by
his Revelation of Jesus Christ. They were
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drawn off, it seems, by the Insinuations of wicked and designing Men, *desiring again to be under the Law*, and to observe Circumcision. As the general drift therefore of the Apostle in this Epistle is to shew them that this new dispensation of the Gospel, had freed them from the rigour of the Law, that is, from the necessity of Mosaical Rights and Observances, and from that exact and perfect Obedience required under the Penalty of the Curse: So again, lest under pretence of that freedom which the Gospel had given them, they should be guilty of those vicious Practices, which their false Teachers so industriously endeavoured to infuse. He advises them particularly in this Chapter, to order all their actions according to the Spirit of that Gospel which they had received; and if they pretended to Christianity, they should follow the Rules it prescribes. *If we live in the Spirit* (saith he) *let us also walk in the Spirit.*

Having spoken thus much concerning that which gave occasion to the Words; I shall now proceed to tell you,

First, *What it is to walk in the Spirit.*
 Secondly, *How we shall know when we are in the Spirit.*
 Third-

Thirdly, I shall shew the Obligations which lie on us all to walk in the Spirit.

And Lastly, From what shall be thus said, I shall conclude all with some close reflections on our own Lives and Practices.

1. Then, What it is to Walk in the Spirit. The word Spirit has many and very different significations in the Holy Scriptures; and it would be no less tedious than improper to reckon them all up in this place. Sometimes it is taken for that supreme divine faculty that is in us, the Soul of Man, and for the various Passions of Joy or Grief, which either please or disturb us. Sometimes it is taken for a temper of Religion; for an economy or dispensation which is settled and prescribed us by God. Thus the Law is called, *Rom. 8. 15. The Spirit of Bondage*; which indeed was a severe and an harsh dispensation, so opposite to that which in the same Verse is called, *The Spirit of Adoption*, which is that tender and gentle way of God's proceeding with us now under the Gospel. And in this sense of a temper of Religion, is to be taken our Saviour's Answer to his Disciples, in his passage thro' *Samaria*; when some of them

Church were

Luk. 9. 53.

Ver. 55.

Ver. 56.

were all transport and fury at the inhospitality of the Samaritans, who would not receive our Lord, because his Face was as though he would go to Jerusalem; and therefore they being impatient to shew a Revenge proportionable to the Affront they thought our Lord had received, waited only for a Commission from him of Commanding Fire to come down from Heaven. Lord (said they) wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven & consume them, as Elias did. But the blessed Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, Ie know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; that is, ye know not that that oeconomy or dispensation, which I intend to establish by the Gospel, inspires Men with ease and with forbearing Tempers; and with a higher degree of Charity than was ever yet required or practised by the Prophets under the Law. For these Men were often moved and impowered with an inward Zeal to destroy, without any more ado the Enemies of God. But the temper of the Gospel is to be otherwise; for The Son of Man (saith he) came not to destroy Mens Lives but to save them. Sometimes the word Spirit is taken for those super-natural and extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were so very common in the first Ages of the Church.

Church : Thus *St. Paul* arguing in this Epistle with the *Galatians*, about the wonderful Advantages they had received upon their embracing the Gospel, says, *This only would I learn of you, Received you the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the bearing of Faith?* where by the Spirit is to be understood the several Gifts of it, and the diversities of Operations, of which we have a particular account given in the 12. Ch. of the 1st of the *Corinthians*, And which were given to every Man to profit withal. *Gal. 3. 2.* But not to run on in many and foreign significations of the Word, by the Spirit in the Text, is only and properly (as I judge) to be understood the Gospel it self; in which sense, both in this and in other places of *St. Paul's* Epistles, it is taken as opposed to the Law set forth under the Title of the *Flesh*. So then by walking in the Spirit is here to be meant, the governing ones self according to the Rules and Precepts of the Gospel. The imitating that sacred Temper of which we have the Commands and Pattern in Christ: And instead of following the Lusts and Desires of the *Flesh*, the secular and sensual Ends to which this World naturally carries Men; and which are so eagerly

judged of the goodness or pravity of our

Act.

ly pursued by the greatest part of Mankind; We should strictly live up to the Religion we profess, by ordering our Conversation according to the Gospel of Christ.

And this will, 2dly, inform us how We shall know when we are in the Spirit. There have been in all Ages of the Church strange Pretenders to the Spirit, and to the immediate Inspirations of it; which is a thing no less vain in it self, than pernicious in its Consequences. Men of dark and melancholy Tempers are those who most commonly run this way; for they being the Persons who generally Think most, and in whom impressions being once made, stick the longest; when ever it happens that they entertain any false Opinions in Religion, they are always defended by them with that Obstinacy and inward Pride, as will not admit the least contradiction. So that the most convincing Reasons and powerful Arguments, which commonly have a happy and good effect on free and ingenuous Minds, do but make these Men the worse: and the greater opposition they at any time find from Reason or publick Authority, the more they value themselves upon their opposition to both. And thus the violent

working of Conceits, and a Spiritual Pride raises within them an odd heat and Zeal, which at last turns it self into down-right Enthusiasm; and thus these Men unhappily mistaking a warmth and transport within them for Divine Inspiration, and looking on that as a super-natural effect, which really, after all, is but the pure notions of Blood and Spirits; They are from hence often guilty of those extravagancies, in which neither Reason nor Religion can justify them; and of which ours, as well as other Neighbouring Countries, have often felt the sad and lamentable Effects. But after all, let some Mens pretences be what they please to inward Motions and immediate Inspirations of the Spirit, this is certain and infallible, That as God has only left us his Word in the Scriptures as the sole Rule and Measure of our Obedience, and according to which we are to direct and govern our Lives and Actions; so he that performs the things which the Revealed Will of God requires of us may rest assured, that he is in the Spirit; For he (saith St. John in his first Epistle, chap. 3. ver. 24.) *that keepeth God's Commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.* The Scriptures (I say) being the only Rule now left us, by which we can judge of the goodness or pravity of our

Actions, every one may hence easily know
 and conclude in himself, whether he is in the
 Spirit, by being conscious to himself, whether
 he forms his Life and Actions according to the
 Precepts laid down in the Gospel, as the only
 measure of his Obedience: And this I dare
 say, that each particular Man, or publick Com-
 munion of Christians, of what denomination
 or Country soever it may be, has most of the
 Spirit, that comes the nearest to this Rule.
 Christianity requires of us all a firm Faith and
 a sincere Obedience to the things it enjoyns,
 and he that hath the first, and faithfully dis-
 chargeth the latter, that is, he who hath a Faith
 to believe what is required, and lives ex-
 actly according to his belief, may be assured
 that he is in the Spirit, because he does that
 which God requires of him, and for which he
 shall hereafter receive that exceeding great
 Reward which God has promised in his Word.
 That the governing ones Life and Actions ac-
 cording to the rules and temper of the Gospel
 is the being in the Spirit, is a truth besides as
 safe as it is certain, for he who orders himself
 this way, will be sure never to do amiss, be-
 cause he will always modestly keep within the
 bounds which his duty prescribes him: Where-
 as he who is led by other notions of being in
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the Spirit, and has no other rule for his Actions but that motion and warmth he feels within him, may easily, by mistaking a hot and extravagant Fancy for the sacred impulse of the Holy Spirit, be guilty of very bad things, and thus too often be unluckily found a *Fighter against God*, at that very time he thinks himself immediately inspired by Him. From what therefore has been said, every sober and serious Man may easily know and conclude when he is in the Spirit, if he shews in every thing he does that Temper which the Gospel requires of us; if in a steady and regular Conversation of Life, he expresses what *Love, Joy, Rejoicing, Longsuffering, that Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, that Meekness and Temperance*, Vertues against which there is no Law, and that are all of them so eminently required in Christians. Let such a one go on as he has begun, and never doubt of his being in the Spirit, because he shews so much of that which St. Paul calls the *Fruit of the Spirit*. On the other hand, let Man signify what they please of their being in the Spirit, if their Lives and Actions are not conformable to the Temper of that Gospel which is to be their Rule; If their stiffness to their own Sentiments makes them value and consider none but themselves. If their Zeal for their

Gal. 5. 22.

et. 22.

own Sect or Opinion makes them exclude all others from their Charity, who are not of their own Communion and Party. If that Love which is such a peculiar Mark and Character of a Christian, is not extended even to those who perhaps may little deserve it at their hands; If instead of that Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, which are all the beauties and excellencies of a Christian Life, they are full of Hatreds, Variances, Emulations, Strifes; If instead of that Meekness and Temperance, which are Vertues that make us easie both to our selves and others, they are guilty of Envyings, Murthers, Drunkenness, Revelings, and such like. In a word, if Mens inward Temper or outward Deportment be such as carries them to such extreams as are inconsistent with the Duties which the revealed Will of God has enjoyned us, let such, of what Church, Sect, or Opinion soever they may be, pretend to what they please, and gild over their Actions with fine and godly Words, they are such, however, to whom we may justly apply that of St. Jude, *These be they who separate themselves, being Sensual, nor having the Spirit.*

Ver. 19.

And now I come, 3dly, to shew the Obligations which lie on us all of walking in the Spirit:

Spirit: The walking in the Spirit being, as I have already shewn, the conforming our selves to the Rules and Precepts of the Gospel, Our Obligations of doing this, will appear,

1st, From the reasonableness that there is of living according to what we believe.

2dly, From the easiness of the Things enjoyed

And lastly, Because this wholly tends to our own Interest and Advantage.

1. Then I shall shew the Obligations of *walking in the Spirit, from the reasonableness of living according to what we believe.* The firm adhering to what a Man believes, and the ordering his Life according to his Belief, is a thing so very decent and pleasing in the Eyes of all Mankind, that it is natural for one to commend such a practice even in that very Man whose Opinion we may otherwise condemn. On the other side, let a Man be never so Orthodox in his Faith, if he is scandalous and irregular in his Life, this raises such an inward scorn and disesteem in the Breast of all good and understanding Men, as is sufficient to testify what a low and mean Opinion the World generally has of such a Person: For when there

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is not that harmony which there should be betwixt ones belief and practice; when the Holiness of Mens Lives does not answer the purity of that Religion they profess, it either argues a wonderful falseness and design in desiring to appear otherwise than they really are; or a strange insensibility and neglect not to mind that which of all other things is their greatest concern. 'Tis mean and pitiful to be a bare Pretender in any thing; but it is really wicked and unaccountable to be so in matters of Religion, where the greatest sincerity of Mind is required; and believe me, all is but Hypocrisy and folly without it. All Religion naturally supposes an Obedience to the Things it enjoins; and Christianity is so very exact in this, above all others, that *whosoever shall keep the whole Law of it, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* If those therefore who call themselves Christians, are really perswaded of the truth of the Gospel, is it not most reasonable they should be of that temper it requires? If Men are convinced of the excellency of the Precepts which Christ has commanded, is it any thing less than Madness not to follow them to the uttermost? And what a strange degree of folly is it in them not to make that the constant Rule of their Lives, which they themselves

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confess to be the only means of their Happiness?

But 2^{dly}, Our obligations of *walking in the Spirit, will appear from the easiness of the things enjoyned us*. Christianity is a thing so very plain and simple, that never any Religion yet proposed so great Rewards, and yet occasions fewer difficulties to obtain what is promised. Every thing it commands is easie and natural, either what directly tends to the Peace of the World, or the Reformation of our selves: And that which seems most harsh and difficult, is quickly overcome, when one sets heartily and sincerely about it. Of the many Religions which have appeared in the several Ages of the World, some of them have tied up their Votaries to such severe and hard performances, whereof many have been so cruel and unaccountable, that Nature seems to shrink even at the very thoughts of repeating them. As for the Religion of the Jews, which of all others has the nearest relation to us Christians, there was even in that such a multiplicity of Legal Rights and Observances, so many attendances upon Feasts at Jerusalem, which was the only place of Worship, and whither Men were bound to repair, so many times a Year, as put them upon Journies no less tedious than expensive; and from which nothing but

But an invincible necessity could excuse them. But the Gospel, tho' it raises Men to a more noble and excellent way of Devotion, yet requires none of those servile and bodily Labours to perform it: for instead of the laying on us such things as the weight of Legal Rights and Observances, it only requires an inward disposition and a temper of Mind, *the Worshipping God in Spirit and Truth*, for the Father seeketh *John 4. 23.* *such to Worship him.* Instead of forcing us to take long Journeys thro' the whole Kingdom to a fixt place of Worship (which was exactly the case of the *Jews*) we may now serve God at home here in our Chapels, and in our Churches. Instead of the *Blood of Bulls and Goats*, as an atonement for Sin, God only requires now of us a *Broken and a Contrite heart*; And the most acceptable Offerings and Oblations we can make him, are the Sacrifices of Prayers and Thanksgivings. In a word, the things expected of us under the Gospel being purely Spiritual, the forming within us a new Creature, by Crucifying the Flesh, with the affections and Lusts; This is a work which may be done in all times and Places, and the difficulty of it is easily removed, when we our selves are pleased but to use the means which are prescribed.

But

But lastly, our Obligations of walking in the Spirit, will farther appear, *when, beside the easiness of the things enjoined us, it wholly tends to our own Interest and Advantage.* As God in his Wisdom endued Man above all other Creatures with a power of knowing and performing his Will; so again, by a Goodness as great as his Wisdom, he has made him the promise of eternal Felicity, to encourage him in the performance of his Duty: we therefore see the end of all our just and good actions seem chiefly designed by God to our own Interest and Advantage. For tho' God, who is the Fountain of all Goodness, has declared himself to be pleased with the justice and uprightness of our Actions; yet, as he is a Being infinitely happy in himself, he cannot any ways be supposed to stand in need of the Services of his Creatures: His Glory is not augmented by our poor Prayers and Thanksgivings; nor is his Greatness diminished by any neglect of our Duties. *Can a Man (Job 22. 2, 3.) be profitable to God, as he that is Wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art Righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy way perfect? If thou Sinnest, what dost thou against him? And if thy Transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou art Righteous,*

Chap. 35.
6, 7.

what givest thou him, or what receiveth he at thy hands? So then we see that the performance of the things which the Gospel requires of us, tends wholly to our own advantage: Which consideration alone should be sufficient powerfully to engage us to do the things that are requisite to obtain it: For tho' Arguments drawn from ones Interest are not always good and proper to be urged in things relating to this World; yet they are some of the best which can be used in respect of the happiness of the next. Since God therefore has created us all with the design of making us eternally happy with him on the conditions required at our hands, this should stir us up to such suitable and grateful returns of governing our Lives and Actions, according to the Rules he has prescribed us, that we may all at last be partakers of those endless Blessings and Joys he intends us. If the *walking in the Spirit* is the only way of conducting us to Glory, this should make us all *become the Servants of God; that having our Fruit*

Rom. 6. 22. unto Holiness, we may have our end everlasting Life.

What is said to all at large, is applied but by few to themselves; so that tho' a general Discourse, like this, may be most pleasing to Men, because it touches them least, yet 'tis on-
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ly a particular and an affectionate application of things to our own Persons and Circumstances, which leaves the most sensible and lasting Impressions upon us: Having therefore shewn what is meant by the *Spirit*, and set forth the several Obligations which lie on us all to walk in the *Spirit*, I shall now conclude this Discourse with some close reflections on our own Lives and Practices.

'Tis the peculiar Blessing of us who are now met together in this place, that as we are all Professors of Christianity, so we declare our selves likewise Members of that Reformed part of it, which is established in this Nation, and which is both the strength and glory of the Reformation: But now let us examine ourselves a little in that double relation we have both as we are Christians and Members of this particular Church. The things to which the Gospel obliges us are as plain in themselves as they are easie in the performance of them! The assistances of Grace which we receive are many, and the promises of Reward are unspeakable: We pretend all to be so far from disbelieving the Gospel, that there's not a Man amongst us, but would think it the highest affront not to be thought a good Christian: But now after all, *If we live in the Spirit, do we also*

walk in the Spirit? Does the sense of our Duty stir us up to the performance of it? and does the Holiness of our Lives answer the purity of that Religion we profess? Has Christianity, I ask you, that happy and blessed effect upon us as to make us every way better than those who either never heard or believed it? and is the distinction as plain and as visible as it ought to be betwixt us and the rest of the World, for Piety and Vertue, as much as our advantages to Godliness are greater and more excellent than theirs? Have we that true sense of God and Religion which becomes the Greatness and Majesty of the one? and do we order our Lives with that circumspection and care, as we may not bring the least reproach or dishonour on the other? Have we God always in our thoughts, and do we daily offer up unto him our Sacrifices of Prayers and Thanksgivings? Do we in our Addresses to him heartily bewail our own Sins, and the many occasions we may have given others of offending him? Do we intercede with God for others as well as for our selves? and does the sense of the Miseries and Wants to which Mankind is subject, kindle in us that universal and Christian Charity, as to beg his blessing on all Men, of what Nation, Country, Religion, Sect, Principle, or Opinion they may be? Are

we thankful to God for the least Mercy we receive? and are we resigned and easie in the meanest condition we may be in? Do we study to glorifie God by all means? and do we employ our whole time for the Salvation of our Souls? Do we live and act as becomes those who really think there are Rewards and Punishments for Men in the next Life, and that we must all be for ever happy or for ever miserable in another World, as we behave our selves here in this? Do the Thoughts and Consideration of this work in us that serious care and concern as to be always earnest about our own happiness, and not to do any thing by which we may miss that Glory which we hope to possess? Do we mind that great and excellent Rule of Christianity, of *doing to others as we would they should do unto us*? and do we make a Conscience of not promoting our Honour, Riches, Reputation, or Interest, by any other means than what Religion prescribes and justifies? Do we make the Commands of the Gospel the Rule of our Lives? and in all our Actions have we a respect to the Precepts and Example of Christ? Is *that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus*? and do we imitate that Humility of which he made himself such a wonderful Pattern and Example to the World? Is that

Mat. 7. 12.

Phil. 2. 5.

that Love, by which all Men shall know that we are his Disciples, so firm and universal in us, that it goes much beyond that of the Publicans, by being extended to Enemies as well as Friends? Does that Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, that Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, that Meekness and Temperance, which are all the Fruits of the Spirit, do they, I say, appear as eminently in our Lives, as they are all really necessary to our happiness? Are we Merciful, and are we Forgiving, and do we cheerfully relieve the necessities of those who stand in need of our Charity, considering, *That we our selves are also in the Body?* Are we moderate in our Desires, Modest in our Behaviours, Peaceful in our Tempers, Just to our Promises, and exemplary in our Lives? These are the general Duties of Christians, and it will be well if our Hearts condemn us not, when with a severe and searching care we examine our selves, how conformable our Lives have been to these Rules.

Let us now pass on from that general notion of our being Christians, to see how we live and act as we are Members of this particular Church. We all value our selves, I suppose, upon our being of the Church of England, (and it is a blessing for which next to the Redemption of the World, we stand most indebted to
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Heaven) but are we as Holy in our Lives as we are Orthodox in our Faith? And are we as like the Primitive Christians for Piety and Zeal, as much as our Religion and Worship, of any other in the World, comes the nearest to theirs? We come once a Week at least into this, or some other House of God, and we do well in it; but do not many of us by our heedlessness and unconcernedness too often *Offer up the Sacrifices of Fools, not considering that they do Evil?* Do we mind the business we are here about, and the greatness of that Majesty, before which we are now in a more particular manner present? Do we think that God is in this place, and do we bring with us such thoughts as suit with the Holiness of his House? Do we draw near to God with our Hearts, as well as with our Lips? And have we upon our Minds and Consciences that true sense of his Goodness, Justice, Power, and Mercy, as may at the same time raise in us both a Love and a Fear of his Name? We fall down formally here upon our Knees, and, in our Confession, we tell God roundly to his Face, *That we have erred and strayed from his ways like lost Sheep; That we have left undone the things which we ought to have done; and that we have done the things which we ought not to have done; and that there is no health in us;* nay, we go high-

Communion
Service.

higher yet, and tell him, that *we earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for our misdoings; that the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, and that the burthen of them is intolerable: But have we now all this while that hearty contrition and inward sorrow, that uneasiness and dissatisfaction in our selves which becomes those who are truly Penitent for their Offences? After these large Confessions of our Follies and Sins, do we shew a hatred of them by the Reformation of our Lives? And are we as careful to amend as we are always ready to confess our Misdoings? Do we consider that God is not to be mocked, and that when we come here into his presence, and pretend to confess our Sins to him, without any thoughts of amending them, that then we offer up the highest Affront to Heaven, and justly provoke God's Vengeance against us, for adding Hypocrisie to our other Transgressions?*

As for *Baptism* and the *Supper of the Lord*, how little do we mind the Vows and Promises which we have made in the one, and with what a coldness and unconcernedness do too many of us come to the other? we promise in our *Baptism* to *Renounce the Devil and all his Works, the vain Pomp and Glory of the World, meth all Covetous desires of the same:* But now where are the Men amongst us who are not lead away Captive by them

them all. Where is that resignation we pretended when we were admitted Members of Christs Flock? and to whom does the Humility of the Cross appear more glorious than all the Vanities of the World? Where is the dying to Sin and the living to Righteousness? And how few are there, notwithstanding all their Promises, who Manfully fight under Christs Banner, and continue his faithful Soldiers and Servants to their lives end?

As for the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, this Church invites us to it by its Ministers in the name of God, calls us in Christs behalf, exhorts us, as we love our own Salvation, that we will be Partakers of this Holy Communion.

Communion Service.

Now we, who pretend to be of this Church, do we mind the earnest and godly desires of it? Do we take all opportunities of coming to that Holy Table, and thus set forth the Lords Death till he comes? Do not many of us seldom or never appear there? and instead of Doing this often in remembrance of him, by reason of an extraordinary Coldness and some idle excuses, communicate but once or twice in our Lives? As for the others again of us who are often present at those Holy Mysteries, do we with a true penitent Heart, and a lively Faith, receive that Holy Sacrament? Do we come with that serious

1 Cor. 11.
24, 26.

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ness and due preparation of Soul, which becomes the most high and solemn part of our Religion? *Do we judge ourselves that we be not judged of the Lord?* Have we a detestation of Sin, and a hearty Repentance for the Follicies of our Lives? Have we a flaming desire after God and Heaven in our selves? and have we a perfect Love and Charity for others? *Modw*

In all the other acts and duties of our Religion, have we that tenderness and concern for it, as really becomes those who pretend so much the Honour of God, and the prosperity of this Church? We say indeed (and 'tis most true) that this Church, for its constitution and Doctrine, is the *Joy of the whole Earth*, but do we endeavour to give it a farther lustre and beauty by the excellency of our Lives, and to raise it from that degree of scorn and contempt, which the looseness and scandals of too many of its Members have brought on it? There is indeed every where such a wonderful coldness in Religion, and such a corruption of manners in the World; so much pretence to Honour and Conscience, and so little regard to either; such a general Infection, and such a decay of Piety in all sorts of Men, that I cannot indeed say, That those of our Communion are the worst, because all Parties are so extremely
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bad amongst us: But however, do not we lie too much open to censure, and have not many of us given the World too great reason to think that some of us are arrived in that degree of hardness and impicity, that we can now go on and sin without either fear or shame. Do we consider therefore what Reproaches we bring upon Religion and our selves, what dishonour to God, and what particular disservice to this Church, by thus exposing it to the laughter and obloquy of its Enemies on all sides, who can never get any advantage over it, but what springs from our own Indiscretion and Follies?

This is a thing, which as it is apt to beget in one very melancholy thoughts, so it would now furnish me with vast variety of Discourse; but instead of asking any more searching Questions (which may look like so many Reproaches on our Lives and Practices) I shall conclude all with my hearty Prayers to God; That it would please him to give us his Grace for the good Conduct and Government of our selves, both as we are Christians, and Members of this particular Church.

That it would please him, that as we *live in the Spirit*, we may also *all of us walk in the Spirit*; And that having so many helps and
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assistance for the performance of our Duties,
we may receive such returns of Virtue
and Goodness as become us; so that
they who are bad may grow better, and that
those who are already Good, may go on to
that Perfection which they aspire. Lastly,
that all of us being made perfect by the Spirit
here, may reign with God eternally in Heaven
hereafter.

July 24,

24.

*Now unto him who is able to keep you from
falling, and to present you faultless before the
Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy.*

*To the only Wise God our Saviour, be Glory
and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and
ever. Amen.*

But instead of asking any more Learning Que-
stions (which may look like so many Re-
proaches on our Lives and Practices) I shall
conclude all with my hearty Prayers to God;
That it would please him to give us his Grace
in the good Conduct and Government of
our selves, both as we are Christians, and
Members of this particular Church.

That it would please him, that as we live
in the Spirit, we may also all of us walk in the
Spirit: And that having so many helps and

Assistance

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